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>> neglect cases. They get the complaint and depending on seriousness, they can go out the same day. They know first hand the jeopardy of the victim or client, as they call it, and they have put together a good report already. We work really close with them because we respect their opinions on what they saw and thought. It helps us get a jump start on whether this is going to be a case we are going to investigate or is this one that is regulatory in nature. We do not do regulatory cases. If a facility is not following rules and regulations, it falls under the inspector general's responsibilities. Sometimes it can work to our advantage, that because somebody broke a rule and somebody was seriously injured, we can use their information to help us. But, we all work independently and file our own reports because we are looking at the cases differently. We are looking at it criminally.

What are some of the challenges the Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Control face in serving and protecting the elderly population?

When we use Chapter 209, the way the law is written is very challenging to interpret and is very difficult for us.

As far as challenges in Medicaid fraud cases, I guess having a small amount of people makes it difficult to concentrate on each case individually and give it as much attention as you should. The investigators we have here do that, they give it the best of their ability. They work really hard at trying to keep up with all of their cases. It is very challenging because the cases are just so time consuming. We

try to keep up with all of the cases to keep them current. We have to really multitask. We are taking phone calls on one case while typing another one. We are waiting on phone calls from people that we need to talk to, but they are off work. It is just hard to get everything you need on a case. So, they are just very, very challenging. We are the only unit in the state that deals with this issue and there are not a lot of us. I think the laws are very vague. They are definitely ambiguous. It is gray, it is not black and white and that is very challenging because we have to argue for that black and white.

What have been pivotal moments throughout your career that have led you to where you are now?

The one thing that is really good about these cases is when the media gets involved. We, as a culture, place so much stress on animal abuse. They just had a puppy mill found and everybody is up in arms, and people came out of the woodwork to be foster parents. We spend so much time on, and everybody is so sensitive to, animal abuse. We don't have that with elder abuse yet. We don't see that public outcry of, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe that happened.' But I'm starting to see more elder abuse news stories, which is starting to educate people. I like that for two reasons. One, it tells people that these crimes are being investigated, and they might not be able to do that to their mom. It can be a deterrent. Two, it is also good to show the public what is actually occurring and get people to be more sensitive to our elderly, and how some people are treating them. I'm starting to see more cases in the news and people are starting to become more focused on how horrific this is.

For example, seeing Mickey Rooney and his family, they stole everything. Mickey Rooney spoke at the University of Kentucky via satellite, and he talked about how his family totally exploited him and took everything he had. It was just horrible. When you see these people, you realize it could affect anybody. It is not just poor little old Ms. Smith down the street, it could be Mickey Rooney — it could be anybody. I think it starts to get people to see that this is a bigger problem than they ever thought.

Look how we are with child abuse. Child abuse used to be disciplining your